REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Examiner's Advisory Action of October 24, 2008 issued in relation to the present Patent Application, the Applicant submits the Remarks below.

Claims 1-9 are pending in the Application. Claim 1 is an independent claim.

Regarding 35 USC 103 Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 7 remains rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Machida (US 7,002,702) in view of Iizuka (US 6,771,385).

Claims 5-6 and 8-9 remains rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Machida in view of Iizuka, and further in view of known prior art.

Claim 1 of the present application requires a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed to be broadcast to each of the other consumers. The total (ie, total of the values broadcasted and the values received from all the other consumers) is stored in each consumer.

In the Advisory Action of October 24, 2008 the Examiner asserts that each printer manages a set of logs (column 19, lines 13-15), and interprets the same to mean the other logs from other devices on the network. The Examiner asserts further that for the system of Machida to work properly, the consumption of each of the devices must be sent to other devices via the management server.

Column 19, lines 1-40 describes the log information of devices (device log information). Lines 2-5 clearly state that "*Any one of the PCs shown in FIG. 1 serves as a management server and the management server controls the device log information.*" In the example printer log information 2870 shown in Fig. 28, the management server maintains printer log information for M printers in the network. For each printer a total number of logs is stored in 2882 (which is N1 in the example), as well as details of each of the N1 logs in 2884-1 to 2884-N1. In order to maintain the printer log information each printer sends its detail log information to the management server upon completion of each print job. "*Thus, the latest log information is updated every time each printer on the network executes the job.*" (Column 19, lines 26-27)

When a user selects a printer function or a copying function to be performed by a printer, the user's PC requests the log information for that printer from the management server, and decides whether the printer has enough toner to complete the function.

Thus, to summarize, each printer sends its log information to the management server where updated log information is maintained for each printer. When a PC wants to use a particular printer, the log information of that particular printer is sent to the PC.

Comparing the invention claimed in claim 1 with the teaching of Machida, Applicant acknowledges that Machida teaches a method of tracking usage of one or more common resources (printer consumables) by a plurality of consumers (PCs).

Machida teaches sending from each printer to the single management server a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed in that printer. Machida further teaches receiving the usage information by the management server and storing a record in the management server of the total of the values consumed.

Additionally, (in order for the system to work), Machida also teaches requesting the total of one of the shared resources by one or more consumers from the management server.

Applicant maintains that Machida fails to teach broadcasting <u>from each consumer to each of the other consumers</u> a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed, receiving <u>at each of the consumers</u> the broadcasted values from the other consumers, and storing <u>in each consumer</u> a record of the total of the values that the consumer broadcasted and the values received from the other consumers.

Both systems are workable and includes a number of trade-offs. In the system of Machida information is kept centrally at the management server. This has the advantage that each printer needs to send its log information to the management server only. The log information is sent to a particular PC about a particular printer only when the particular PC wants to use the particular printer.

In contrast thereto the claimed invention stores the information in a decentralized manner. If the method of the present invention is to be implemented in the system of Machida (Fig. 1), the respective PCs would broadcast to each other PC in the system a value indicative of an amount of the resources consumed, and each PC would keep a total. The advantage of the instant method is that each PC always knows that total for each resource. The disadvantage is that the amount of communication is increased, as well as duplication of storage.

Thus, Machida teaches away from the claimed invention.

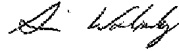Iizuka also fails to teach those features.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the 35 USC 103(a) rejection of claim 1 have been traversed. The 35 USC 103(a) rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn as claim 1 is allowable over the references as applied by the Examiner. Claims 2 to 9 are dependent on allowable claim 1, and are allowable for at least that reason.

CONCLUSION

Allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Very respectfully,

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